





*Sanctuary Waters ; or, the Spread of the  
Gospel.*

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A

S E R M O N,

PREACHED BEFORE

The Massachusetts Baptist Missionary  
Society,

AT THEIR

ANNUAL MEETING,

Boston, *May 28, 1806.*

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*The profits arising from the sale of this Discourse will be applied  
to the use of the Society.*

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AT a Meeting of the TRUSTEES of *The Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Society*, holden in Boston, May 29, 1806, VOTED—That the thanks of this Society be given to the Rev. *WILLIAM COLLIER*, for his Sermon delivered before them the last evening, and that he be requested to give a copy for publication.

*A true Copy from the Records :*

THOMAS BALDWIN, *Sec'ry.*

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## Missionary Sermon.

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EZEKIEL xlvii. 3, 4, 5.

AND WHEN THE MAN THAT HAD THE LINE IN HIS HAND WENT FORTH EASTWARD, HE MEASURED A THOUSAND CUBITS, AND HE BROUGHT ME THROUGH THE WATERS; THE WATERS WERE TO THE ANKLES. AGAIN HE MEASURED A THOUSAND, AND BROUGHT ME THROUGH THE WATERS; THE WATERS WERE TO THE KNEES. AGAIN HE MEASURED A THOUSAND, AND BROUGHT ME THROUGH; THE WATERS WERE TO THE LOINS. AFTERWARD HE MEASURED A THOUSAND; AND IT WAS A RIVER THAT I COULD NOT PASS OVER: FOR THE WATERS WERE RISEN, WATERS TO SWIM IN, A RIVER THAT COULD NOT BE PASSED OVER.

EZEKIEL began to prophesy about the middle of the Babylonish captivity. His predictions were generally delivered in the symbolical language, and then explained in the alphabetical or plain language. This method was usually adopted by the prophets, and is one cause of the obscurity of prophecy. It cannot be supposed we should understand the prophecies, while we are ignorant of the language in which they are written.

An acquaintance with the manners and customs of the east, and with oriental literature in general, is necessary to a correct knowledge of the sym-

bolical language of scripture: and we do not think it extravagant to say, that this would enable us to understand with equal facility the predictions of the prophets, as a knowledge of any foreign language enables us to translate it into our mother tongue.

At first view, especially when we consider the perspicuity of the gospel, we do not always see the wisdom of God in this obscurity; it is necessary, however, to the government of free moral agents, and the fulfilment of prophecy. In prophecy there are certain characters delineated, and many of the circumstances attending its accomplishment marked with minute exactitude and precision. A previous knowledge of these circumstances, in their designed application, would often prevent the fulfilment of the prediction. Had the Jews understood the prophecies respecting the humiliation of Christ, would they have cried, "Away with him, away with him?" Had they foreseen the divine vengeance, would they have been the voluntary actors in such a tremendous scene? Would they have imbrued their hands in the blood of the Son of God? When these very murderers were convinced from the scriptures whom they had crucified, they cried out, under the most poignant conviction of the enormity of their guilt, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Even an apostle seems to become their apologist; "Brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers."

There are other prophecies in which a degree of obscurity is necessary to their accomplishment. In the 17th chapter of the Apocalypse, we have a



remarkable prediction respecting the Roman hierarchy, announced in the symbolical language of the ancients. If the Roman pontiff had understood this prophecy, would he have fulfilled a prediction in which that communion is depicted in such shameful and degrading characters? Would he have inscribed *mystery* upon his tiara? the very word written upon the forehead of the whore of Babylon!

The obscurity of prophecy, then, so far from being any ground of censure on the divine government, is for the interest of the church. By this mean her designs are concealed from her enemies, and the Christian warfare carried on with certainty of success.

Little were our enemies aware, when they killed the Prince of Life, that his death was the salvation of sinners; that he died according to "the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God;" that his doctrine was to be the weapon that should demolish the strong holds of Satan in the hearts of the children of men, and that principalities and powers were to be spoiled by the cross of Christ.

It becomes us, therefore, to admire and adore the wisdom of God, in bringing good out of evil; to search the prophecies for truth as for hid treasure, and to look to the man in prayer, who had the line in his hand, and explained to our prophet the vision, and whose prerogative it is to guide his disciples by his Spirit into all truth, that he would open our understandings that we might understand the scriptures.

The prediction of which the text is a part begins at the 40th chapter of this book. The

scene of the vision was a very high mountain in the land of Israel. There was a temple presented to the view of our prophet, the glory of which far transcended that of Solomon's. Its different apartments and various services are described. This temple is the church. While Ezekiel was taking a particular view of the building, he saw the waters gently flow from the south side of the altar, which gradually increased into an impassable river.

This river is a symbolical exhibition of the increase of grace in the heart of every Christian, and of the progress of the gospel in the world. "Living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; and the Lord shall be king over all the earth. In that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one." Grace in believers is "a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

In explaining the text, and applying the truths it contains to the present occasion, we shall endeavour to illustrate such observations as naturally rise from the subject.

I. The first observation which naturally rises in our minds is, that *the spread of the gospel is in exact conformity to the infinite and eternal plan of its Divine Author.*

The man who attended Ezekiel, and explained to him the mysteries of this vision, was the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the man in our text, who had the line in his hand, and went forth eastward and *measured a thousand cubits*, and the waters were to the ankles. Again he *measured a thousand cubits*; the waters were to the knees. Again he *measured a thousand*; the waters were to the loins. Afterward he *measured a thousand*, and the waters



were risen into a river that could not be passed over. The waters flowed exactly according to the appointment of the man who had the direction of them, or in plain language, the gospel spreads exactly according to the eternal plan of the great Head of the Church.

My brethren, if we are favoured with the gospel, while so many millions of the human race are involved in heathen darknesses, we ought to ascribe it to sovereign mercy. It is because Christ hath measured a thousand cubits for the waters of the sanctuary to flow this way.

It would not be a difficult task to illustrate this sentiment by reason and the fitness of things; to shew its harmony with the attributes of God, and that a contrary position in its necessary and certain consequences was atheism, a denial of the being and perfections of JEHOVAH. But as we are now addressing an assembly of professing Christians, we shall appeal to the Bible for the illustration of our doctrine.

When the tabernacle was to be erected in the wilderness, the Lord called Moses into the mount, and gave him an accurate plan of the building, with directions to make every part of it according to divine pattern. The children of Israel were employed in preparing the materials for the building; and when Moses compared their work with the *original plan*, and found they had done it *according to the commandment of the Lord*, he blessed the people.

When God had given David, who was an eminent type of Christ, rest from all his enemies round about, he put it into his heart to build an house for the ark of the Lord. The design was ap-

proved by the prophet, though he was not suffered to carry it into execution, because he had been a man of war. David, however, made preparations for the temple, which were very useful to Solomon, who fitted all the materials so exactly according to the plan which was given from heaven, that when the building was erected, it went up without the noise of axe or hammer.

As the tabernacle and temple were built *according to divine pattern*, so is the church. Christ is “faithful in his house, whose house are we, if we “hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the “hope firm unto the end.”

The personal ministry of Christ and his apostles are a farther illustration of the sentiment now under consideration.

The Master himself has told us on one occasion, that he was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Although it was comparatively a light thing for God to send his Son into the world to save the Jews, and he was set from eternity a light to the Gentiles, and designed for the salvation of the Lord to the ends of the earth, the waters of the sanctuary scarcely flowed beyond the bounds of Judea, till the man in our text, who had the line in his hand, *measured* a thousand cubits eastward, the direction in which most of the Gentile nations lay from Jerusalem.

When Christ sent out the seventy disciples, he gave them but a limited commission; they were directed not to go into the ways of the Gentiles or cities of the Samaritans: after his resurrection their commission was enlarged. It is true they

were to begin to publish salvation at Jerufalem, but they were not to end there; the commiffion is unlimited: “Go ye therefore into all the world, and preach the gofpel to every creature: he that believeth and is baptized fhall be faved; but he that believeth not fhall be damned.”

The miniftry of the apoftles will exemplify the fame truth: all their travels were according to the appointment of Chrift. The *angel* of the Lord directed Philip toward the fouth, unto the way that goeth down from Jerufalem to Gaza, which is defert. And the *Spirit* faid unto him, Go near, and join thyfelf to the chariot of the Ethiopian eunuch.

When Paul and his companions “had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were *forbidden of the Holy Ghoft* to preach the word in Afia. After they were come to Myfia, they afayed to go into Bithynia: but the *Spirit fuffered them not*. And they, paffing by Myfia, came down to Troas. And a vifion appeared to Paul in the night; There flood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, faying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he had feen the vifion, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, affuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gofpel unto them.” This paffage is full to our purpofe. Here we fee, that the heralds of falvation, notwithstanding they had juft received a commiffion to go forth into all the world, and preach the gofpel to every creature, were forbidden of the *Holy Ghoft* to preach the word in Afia: and when they were difpofed to go to one

people, they were miraculously directed to another. Jesus Christ directed the course of his apostles; and does by his providence, word, and Spirit, still direct the travels of all his ministers.

II. The gospel is to go forth from the church.

The waters of the sanctuary proceed from the temple at Jerusalem. "Out of Zion shall go forth a law, (i. e. the gospel,) and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

In conformity to this sentiment, societies are formed, and missionaries sent forth, from the midst of our churches, "having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." "Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined."

III. The gospel, with all its blessings, flows to us through Christ.

The waters of the sanctuary came from under the south side of the ALTAR. Sanctuary waters, or the gospel, literally flowed to us through Christ, when "one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water!"

IV. The spread of the gospel is a gradual work.

The kingdom of heaven, or gospel dispensation, like grace in the soul, may be compared to the growth of corn, which the earth bringeth forth of herself; "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." It "is like to



“ a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took, and  
 “ sowed in his field : which indeed is the least of  
 “ all feeds ; but when it is grown it is the great-  
 “ est among herbs, and (in the eastern country)  
 “ becometh a tree ; so that the birds of the air  
 “ come and lodge in the branches thereof.” It  
 “ is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and  
 “ hid in three measures of meal, till the whole  
 “ was leavened.” Or, it is like “ a handful of  
 “ corn in the earth, upon the top of the moun-  
 “ tains ; the *fruit* thereof shall shake like Leba-  
 “ non.” Thus the gospel, like the river in our  
 text, from small beginnings, will gradually spread,  
 till “ the parched ground shall become a pool, and  
 “ the thirsty land springs of water.”

The whole plan of redemption is not made known to the children of men at once, but opened to us by degrees. It was revealed to our first parents that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. This is a very general promise, and they had but vague and inadequate ideas of the blessings which it contains. Afterward it was revealed to Abraham that Messiah should spring from his loins : and then to Jacob, that he should be of the tribe of Judah ; and some intimation given of the time of his advent. After this it was made known to David that he should descend from his family. The exact time of his birth was pointed out by Daniel ; and the place where he should be born by Micah.

Isaiah appears to have had clearer and more extensive views of the gospel than any of the prophets of the Old Testament. It was revealed to him that Christ should be born of a virgin. He pointed out the voice that cried in the wilderness,

“ Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight  
 “ in the desert an highway for our God. Every  
 “ valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and  
 “ hill shall be made low : and the crooked shall  
 “ be made straight, and the rough places plain :  
 “ and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and  
 “ all flesh shall see it together : for the mouth of  
 “ the Lord hath spoken it.”

Isaiah clearly described the person, offices, and  
 work of Messiah ; pointed out his sufferings and  
 death, and the glory that should follow. He saw  
 the waters flow out of the side of the ALTAR :  
 he beheld them rise to the ankles, to the knees,  
 to the loins, and into a great river that could not  
 be passed over ! In prospect of happy gospel days,  
 he exclaimed, with an enthusiasm not unworthy  
 his subject, “ O Zion, that bringest good tidings,  
 “ get thee up into the high mountain ! O Jerusa-  
 “ lem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice  
 “ with strength ; lift it up, be not afraid : say  
 “ unto the cities of Judah, *Behold your God !* How  
 “ beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of  
 “ him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth  
 “ peace ; that bringeth good tidings of good, that  
 “ publisheth salvation ; that saith unto Zion, Thy  
 “ God reigneth. Thy watchmen shall lift up the  
 “ voice, with the voice together shall they sing ;  
 “ for they shall see eye to eye when the Lord shall  
 “ bring again Zion. Break forth into joy, sing  
 “ together, ye waste places of Jerusalem ; for the  
 “ Lord hath comforted his people, he hath re-  
 “ deemed Jerusalem. The Lord hath made bare  
 “ his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, and  
 “ all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation  
 “ of our God.”



All that is contained in these animated predictions will be realized in the latter day glory of the gospel.

The hopes and expectations of the church were fixed on the coming of Christ. For this they earnestly prayed, and patiently waited. They looked forward to this period with glowing animation. "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord."

All that was done before the coming of Christ, was but preparatory to the work of redemption. The great events in providence had an ultimate reference to his advent, and the establishment of his kingdom. The rise and fall of the four great monarchies of the world, was to make way for the stone cut out without hands to become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth. The law was a dispensation of types and shadows, prophecies and promises, involved in the darkness of Indian, Persian, and Egyptian hieroglyphics: but the gospel is a dispensation of light; perspicuity is one of its prominent characteristics. Christ is the light of the world. The ministers of this dispensation do not, like Moses, put a vail upon their faces. "But we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Hence the prophet calls upon Zion, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

Great progress has been made in theological knowledge and real holiness since the coming of Christ. His disciples are better informed, with

regard to the nature of his kingdom, and the means by which it is to be established in the world, than they were at the commencement of the gospel dispensation. "Ye are the light of the world; the salt of the earth."

The visible progress of the gospel since the Christian era has been gradual. The first gospel church was formed by our Saviour himself at Jerusalem. At his ascension their number was about one hundred and twenty. At some periods, the spread of the gospel has been apparently much more rapid than at others. In a very short time it spread over Judea and Samaria, and the greater part of Italy and Arabia; and we are confident it will continue to spread, until it extends to the uttermost part of the world. "Thy way shall be known upon earth, and thy saving health among all nations."

If the time prescribed for these exercises permitted, it would be proper here to notice the dispensation of the Holy Spirit,\* on whose omnipo-

\* The dispensation of the Spirit may be considered, both with regard to his ordinary and extraordinary gifts: this was spoken of in prophecy, Joel ii. 28, 29. : it was foretold by John the Baptist, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire."

Christ directed his disciples to tarry at Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high. "And when the day of pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

tent energy the success of the gospel depends; but we can only say, the extraordinary effusion of the Holy Spirit at the feast of pentecost, opened a new and most astonishing scene, and promised the universal triumph of Christianity. About three

The *first* thing worthy of observation, in this wonderful event, is the time when it took place; "when the day of "pentecost was fully come:" at this time Jerusalem was thronged with people. A vast number of strangers who came to the feast, on their return home would relate what they had seen and heard; and thus prepare the way for the spread of the gospel among the Gentiles.

As Christ was crucified at one of the great Jewish festivals, so was he glorified at another. Now he was again justified by the Spirit.

*Secondly.* The Holy Spirit descended when the disciples "were all with one accord in one place." Where union, harmony, affection, and fervency in prayer and other devotional exercises prevail in our assemblies, there Jesus will descend in the influences of his Spirit, and take up his abode.

*Thirdly.* His descent was sudden. God is a sovereign in the gift of the Spirit. The sinner is arrested suddenly: the church is comforted unexpectedly.

*Fourthly.* "There came a sound from heaven, as of a "rushing mighty wind." The gospel, accompanied with the influences of the Holy Spirit, will *bear down* with the force of a rushing mighty wind all opposition to its progress.

*Fifthly.* "There appeared unto them cloven (or divided) "tongues, like as of fire." This denotes the different gifts of the Holy Spirit, particularly the variety of languages the disciples could speak with propriety and facility, although they had never learned them. The confusion of tongues at Babel, deprived all the nations of the earth but the Jews of the knowledge of the true God. The gift of tongues at Jerusalem was the mean of communicating the knowledge of the true God, even Jesus Christ, to the Gentiles.

*The appearance was like as of fire.* The Holy Spirit, in a gospel ministry, quickens dead sinners, purifies the conscience, illuminates the understanding, and warms the heart.

thousand were added to the church in one day.\* In a few days their number was increased to five thousand; and additions were daily made of such as should be saved. This is the coming of the kingdom of heaven with power.

The ordinary operations of the Holy Spirit are still necessary to the success of the gospel. "When he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but it is God who giveth the increase.

In tracing the progress of the gospel, how remarkable it is, that the very calamities which befall the church contributed to her enlargement.

When the disciples, except the apostles, were scattered abroad on the account of a violent persecution, they "went every where preaching the word. Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. And there was great joy in that city."

\* It is generally supposed these were all converted under one sermon, preached by Peter; but we see nothing in the history which necessarily confines the whole success of that day to this zealous apostle; his discourse no doubt was more copious than the discourses of the rest of the disciples, and would be of more general use to the church in future ages, and therefore is recorded in the holy scriptures; but it should be remembered, they were *all* filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake with other tongues.

It has been suggested by some, who are eminently distinguished in biblical criticism, whether the addition of three thousand does not seem to be mentioned by the sacred historian rather as the aggregate success of all the disciples on that day than of any one individual.



The Samaritans were a kind of mongrel Jews. The spread of the gospel among them was a distinct thing from the calling of the Gentiles. It was necessary that the word of God should first be preached to the Jews; "but (says the apostle) seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."

The conversion of Saul, of the city of Tarsus, was an important acquisition to the cause of truth. This zealous and faithful preacher of righteousness, in union with several of his brethren, travelled over the greater part of the then known world, and instrumentally planted churches among almost all the nations of the earth.

The calling of the Gentiles was frequently a subject of prophecy. "I have set thee for a light to the Gentiles."

But in tracing the progress of the gospel, a very formidable enemy arrests our attention; an enemy which filled an inspired apostle with amazement: a community of professing Christians drunk with the blood of the saints! This enemy is the little horn spoken of by Daniel; also called the man of sin, mystery of iniquity, antichrist, Babylon, a woman sitting upon a scarlet coloured beast; this is the apocalyptic beast rising out of the sea, with seven heads and ten horns.

During this awful apostasy, the witnesses of Jesus prophesied forty and two months clothed in sackcloth. These witnesses were killed, that is, silenced, by the church of Rome, though not buried. "Their dead bodies lay in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified"

afresh in his members, "three days and an half."\* This was the lowest time the church ever saw, or ever will see.

"The spirit of life from God entered into them (the witnesses,) and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them."

This was the commencement of the ever memorable reformation in the 16th century. Principles were then imbibed and propagated by Zuñglius, Luther, and other reformers, which will never cease to operate, till an all-wise and gracious Redeemer is pleased to usher in the millennial glory of Zion. The waters of the sanctuary now begin to rise!

Events have occurred, and no doubt will occur, dark and mysterious. The work has often been

\* The lewdness of Sodom, the darkness of Egypt, and their cruel oppression of the ancient people of God, render these places striking emblems of the church of Rome. With regard to the time the dead bodies of the witnesses lay in the streets of the great city, learned men have offered different interpretations. Some understand it literally, and refer it either to the period which elapsed from the death of Pallicka, the last Bohemian martyr, to the appearance of Zuñglius and his cotemporaries, at the beginning of the reformation, which was just three years and an half; or to the slaughter of the Albigenses and Waldenses in the year 1686, who appeared again in 1690. But we have no objection to the interpretation of those who refer it to "a certain limited time." If by the *three days and an half* be meant the same period of time as one thousand two hundred and sixty days, or forty and two months, propriety requires a change in the symbols. It would be shocking to our feelings, to say a dead body lay in the street of the great city one thousand two hundred and sixty days or forty and two months, when three days and an half would be as long as it could be preserved from putrefaction. It is said of Lazarus, when he had been dead *four days*, "By this time he stinketh."



retarded, and in some instances apparently retrograde; but this is *only apparent*.

As men, we are often filled with despondency; but as Christians, our hearts glow with an animation akin to the ardour of angels, in prospect of the prosperity of Zion. We fully believe that reformation will succeed reformation, till every corner of the globe shall be illuminated with the rays of the Sun of Righteousness.

Here we must be permitted to say, the glorious revivals of religion we have witnessed in our own happy land, and the news of the triumphs of grace which have saluted our ears from foreign climes, are auspicious precursors of the coming of the Son of Man. Brethren, have our churches ever seen any thing like the present day since the 16th century? We have witnessed almost another pentecost: happy seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord!

Before we conclude this article, it is of importance for us to distinguish between the *real* and *apparent* progress of the gospel.

The apostle speaks of some "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

The conversion of Constantine the great, in the 4th century, has been thought an auspicious event, especially as it delivered the church from one of the most violent of the heathen persecutions.\* But it has been doubted by learned and

\* If heathen Rome has slain her *thousands*, papal Rome has slain her *tens of thousands*. The sufferings of the church, during the first three centuries, were great under the heathen, but were much greater in the subsequent centuries, under the papal emperors. That idolatrous and apostate community

good men, whether it were any advantage to real Christianity. The number, affluence, and ease of the church were greatly increased, but their spirituality and piety did not increase in the same proportion.

The conversion of Clovis I. a pagan king of France, in the 5th century, is subject to the same suspicion. On his baptism at Rheims, more than three thousand of his subjects followed his example. "But," says an elegant writer, "they continued the same in their morals after their conversion as before. When the church opened her doors, and delivered up her keys, to these new converts, she gained nothing in comparison of what she lost. Such Christians, in a long succession, converted Christianity into something worse than paganism. They elevated the church into a temporal kingdom, and degraded temporal kingdoms into fiefs of the church,

may truly be represented as "drunken with the blood of the saints." Nearly *three millions* of lives have fallen a sacrifice to papal persecution. All this "blood of the saints, with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus," is required at the hand of ecclesiastical establishments. Persecution, in some shape or other, is an inseparable concomitant of every shade of "law religion."

"My kingdom," says Christ, "is not of this world." His spiritual empire is in the hearts of his disciples. Christ, as the head of the church, is a spiritual monarch. Our confidence of the establishment and support of his kingdom is not in an arm of flesh, but in the omnipotence of our King. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God." The kingdom of Christ "boasts not of that external pomp and grandeur which constitute the pride of earthly empires, but is illustriously distinguished by a glory peculiar to itself, infinitely superior; and never is its beauty more defaced than when men attempt to embellish it by the splendour of secular magnificence."

“ They founded dominion in grace, and they explained grace to be a love of dominion. By these means they completed that general apostasy known by the name of *popery* ; which rendered the reformation in the 16th century essential to the interests of all mankind.”

The prelate of Rome, in order to repair in some measure the loss his revenue sustained by the reformation, sent a vast number of missionaries into heathen countries, who have with great pomp announced the success of their missions in China, Egypt, Abyssinia, Ceylon, Japan, and other places. But those said to be converted by papal missionaries, do not forsake their former principles and practices : and protestant missionaries declare these *Christians* are greater enemies to true religion than the heathen themselves. *This fact may teach us, that the profession of Christianity without the power, is no real accession to the cause.*

The church of Rome still pursue the same policy. A missionary society has lately been formed in that communion, which has sent out five hundred missionaries.\* O that these were all evangelical and experimental preachers of the word !

V. The gospel contains sublime mysteries.

The waters of the sanctuary are unfathomable. Christianity can never be reduced to the standard

\* The conduct of the church of Rome, in this instance, is worthy of imitation : and so far from being any ground of objection to the formation of missionary societies in protestant churches, ought to stimulate to greater exertions. It is worthy of remark, however, that while the revenues of the former are augmented by missionary exertions, it is a primary object with the latter, to send the gospel to the *desolate*, and support our missionaries by an appropriation of property already in our possession.

of *human* reason. The doctrine of the sacred Trinity, the divinity and incarnation of Jesus Christ, the work of the Holy Ghost in regeneration, the method of justification by one who himself was made a curse, and that we should live by one who died, are mysteries of godliness! These are some of the deep things of God; the unfathomable riches of Christ: things that angels desire to look into.

VI. It is the prerogative of Christ to explain the mysteries of the gospel. He is the man who led our prophet through the waters of the sanctuary: he taught his disciples: he guides them into all truth: he reveals to them the deep things of God, by his Spirit.

VII. The gospel affords comfort and encouragement to thirsty souls, and to anxious awakened sinners. This is that "river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God."

VIII. The gospel will have its course, and finally spread over the world.

Men may as well attempt to arrest the course of nature, as to stop the progress of the gospel. Vain and preposterous are all the attempts of infidels and enthusiasts to divert the course of this river. Equally regardless of the subtlety of worldly philosophy and the rage of *free-will* fanaticism, it rolls on with undeviating majesty, infinitely superior to the Orinoco, Amazon, La Plata, or Mississippi, pure as the river that proceeds, not from the thrones of earthly despots, but from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

Christ spake with *authority* when on earth: and his gospel, attended with the irresistible energy of the Holy Ghost, is still triumphant. "I will



“ pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods  
 “ upon the dry ground. I *will* pour my Spirit  
 “ upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy off-  
 “ spring ; and they *shall* spring up as among the  
 “ grafs, as willows by the water-courses.”

In the improvement of our subject, we shall be obliged to pass over in silence a number of useful reflections we intended to make, and conclude with a few observations immediately connected with the occasion on which we are convened.

1. We are naturally led to reflect upon the remarkable out-pouring of the Holy Spirit upon Zion, for these ten or twelve years past. Just before the commencement of the astonishing triumphs of the gospel to which we refer, infidelity had reared its hideous form, and with a confidence equalled by nothing of the kind but its impudence, was making the most rapid strides in Europe and America. Amidst the political earthquakes which convulsed the kingdoms of this world, and the ecclesiastical concussions which agitated the Roman hierarchy, and threatened its utter destruction, together with all religious establishments, (which shews the folly and danger of the unnatural connexion between the church and state) the enemies of Christianity fondly and vainly anticipated the speedy overthrow of all religion. They published deistical books, formed societies, established correspondencies, and even began to threaten the followers of Immanuel. Good God ! thy children spread their cause before thee in the sanctuary ; they plead, what wilt thou do for thy name’s sake, if thou dost now confound the hopes of Zion ; they plead the promises to thy church, and to thy Son ; they plead thy covenant, thy veracity,

thy blood ! Thou hast heard, thou hast answered from heaven, thou hast scattered the enemy, thou hast disarranged all their plans, and spread confusion and disgrace through all their ranks. " Sing, " O heavens ; and be joyful, O earth ; and break " forth into singing, O mountains : for the Lord " hath comforted his people, and will have mercy " upon his afflicted." While the enemy was coming in like a flood, the SPIRIT of the Lord lifted up a standard against him.

2. The missionary spirit which has attended this work, and the formation of so many missionary societies, give the reformation a singular character, and render it peculiarly impressive on the public mind, especially of the pious.

Whenever the Lord has poured out his Spirit, and granted a season of refreshing to his children, it has always inspired them with love to the precious souls of their fellow men, and with ardent desires for the spread of the gospel. When we, dear brethren, were brought to taste the preciousness of Christ, was it not the first and most ardent desire of our souls, that others might experimentally know the happiness there is in religion ? Hence, Christians have associated, at different times, for missionary purposes : but nothing so general has ever been known at any former period. Now associations are formed, not for the spread of a particular party or sect, but of the common salvation.

What but the power of God could have inspired so many evangelical ministers and churches with one spirit, and have engaged them to direct all their energies to the accomplishment of one grand object, the spread of the gospel ? This cir-



cumstance alone is sufficient to convince every candid, unprejudiced mind, that it is the work of the Lord.

3. The visible success which has attended the preaching of the word, and means of instruction, among the heathen, is worthy of observation, and calls for gratitude and praise; and is an encouragement to greater exertions.

The inhabitants in the new settlements, and Indians in our own country, are favourably disposed towards the gospel: The voice of an evangelical ministry is heard in the wilderness, crying, "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."\*

\* The success which has attended the labours of that venerable, zealous, and faithful servant of Jesus Christ, brother Elkanah Holmes, in the employ of the New York Missionary Society, among the Tuscarora and other Indian nations, for these three years past, is deserving of respectful and grateful notice. Some things have occurred peculiarly trying, and to the eye of human reason discouraging: but those very circumstances, which once wore a gloomy aspect, have been subservient, under divine direction, to the increase of light and conviction among the Indians. "He taketh the wise in their own craftiness, and turneth the counsels of the froward head long." "The wrath of man shall praise him, and the remainder of wrath he will restrain."

Among the Tuscaroras, six or eight give good evidence that they experimentally know the truth as it is in Jesus: and more than seven-eighths of the nation are decidedly in favour of the gospel, and warmly attached to their missionary. Their external reformation is very apparent: they are desirous to exchange their barbarous customs, for the sciences, arts, maxims, and manners of civilization; and their heathen superstition for the gospel of Jesus Christ. They used to be intemperate, but now it is a very rare circumstance to see one of them intoxicated with spirituous liquors.

The missionary plans and exertions of our brethren on the eastern continent, are still more extensive, and certainly not less promising than in our own country.

The Lord's day is religiously observed among them. They give their punctual attendance on the word: they behave with great propriety on such occasions, and listen with tender solicitude to the instructions of the gospel. They have a school established among them, and two meeting houses erected, one in the Seneca and the other in the Tuscarora village, by the legislature of the state of New York. In short, things are in a very favourable train of operation among the Tuscaroras, and some tokens for good among other tribes of the north-western Indians.

The pagan part of the Stockbridge Indians have recently renounced idolatry, and joined the congregation under the care of the Rev. Mr. Sargent, a worthy missionary, in the employment of the societies "for promoting Christian knowledge" and "for propagating the gospel among the Indians and others in North America."

The Macedonian cry is heard still farther to the westward. The temporary excursions of the missionaries sent by this society and the Shaftsbury Association, have been greatly blessed, to the comfort of God's children and the awakening of carelesss, perishing sinners. In the north-western territories of the state of New York, and in some parts of the province of Upper Canada, appearances are very encouraging. Within these three years past, two churches have been constituted upwards of an hundred miles beyond Fort Niagara.

The people are uncommonly anxious to enjoy the blessings of a preached gospel: they press the missionaries with the most urgent importunity to visit them again, and come and bring their families, and live among them. In short, there are hopeful appearances, in almost every direction, of churches arising, if the necessary assistance can be afforded to those who are asking the way to Zion with their faces thitherward.

When we compare these appearances with the scriptures, we shall not be thought enthusiastic, if we are led to believe, that the prophet had the very places in view where our missionaries have travelled, when he exclaimed, "The wilderness,

The isles of the south sea wait for thy law. India is *enriched* with the treasure of the gospel; and Ethiopia stretches out her hand unto God. "And I saw, and, behold, a white horse; and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer."

4. The conversion of a number of the Jews, is an auspicious omen. O when shall the posterity of Abraham walk in the steps of the father of the faithful. A number have already become *Israelites indeed*.

The London Missionary Society have directed their efforts towards this devoted and long forsaken people. Under the patronage of this noble institution, Mr. Christian Frederick Frey, whom we hail as a brother in Christ, and servant of the most high God, has commenced his missionary labours among the Jews.

At first he was attended by hundreds of his brethren and kindred according to the flesh. The young people were candidly disposed to hear him; but the old people were so enraged, and discovered so much of the spirit of their fathers toward the Saviour, crying, "Away with him, away with him," that, if they had had it in their power, brother Frey would have shared the

"and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose."

It is a remarkable circumstance, that our missionaries, who have travelled into those infant settlements, publishing the glad tidings of salvation to the destitute inhabitants, have been greatly blessed in their labours, and favoured with uncommon manifestations of the divine presence. "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

same fate as his Master did among them—crucifixion! His situation became so perilous, that he was obliged to be attended to his place of worship by a guard. At length a decree was passed in all the synagogues in London, that no Jew should insult his person or attend on his ministry. The rich, who violated this decree, exposed themselves to a fine of one hundred pounds; and the poor, to excommunication. This rendered his situation safe, but his meetings were thinly attended; a few, however, regularly give their attendance, and seem to be inquiring, Is Jesus of Nazareth the true Messiah?

Now that remarkable prophecy in Zechariah begins to be fulfilled; “I will pour upon the  
“house of David, and upon the inhabitants of  
“Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplica-  
“tions; and they shall look upon me whom they  
“have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as  
“one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in  
“bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness  
“for his first-born.” The Jews shall be brought in with the fulness of the Gentiles.

5. When the Lord is about to accomplish any great event, he raises up and qualifies suitable instruments for the work. It is with pleasure we see so many of our young brethren stirred up to devote themselves to the ministry. The harvest is great, but labourers are comparatively few; pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he would thrust forth more labourers into his harvest.

6. The translation of the Bible into so many of the oriental languages, and arrangements that are



making to translate it into others, and the probability that it will soon be translated into all the languages in the world, will no doubt greatly contribute to the spread of the gospel. "Let men but read and understand the scriptures, and they cannot but be Christians." Exert yourselves, brethren, to promote the circulation of this best of books, the book of books.\*

7. Brethren, be not unmindful of the hand of the Lord, in raising up so many friends to support, by liberal contributions of their worldly substance, the institutions, plans, and important undertakings, which have been devised and executed by Missionary Societies. The silver and the gold are the Lord's. Surely it must be of the Lord, that the people offer after this sort. Not only the rich and opulent, but Christians in every grade of society, are contriving ways and means to promote the glorious cause, by their prayers, and to honour the Lord with their substance.

8. The tottering condition of the Roman hierarchy, and all ecclesiastical establishments by civil law, the flames of revolution which have burst forth in some parts of the Ottoman empire, are precursors of the destruction of the eastern and western antichrist; and announce the approach of the Son of God, to set up that kingdom which is not of this world.

\* The author would take the liberty to suggest the utility of forming a society in this country, similar to "The British and Foreign Bible Society:" such an institution might be attended with incalculable advantage to the souls of men, and contribute much to the prosperity of Zion. The Bible is a book, to promote the circulation of which, Christians of all denominations can most heartily unite.

Christians, enter into your chambers, until the indignation be overpast. Happy should we be could we assure you, that the purposes of God were to be accomplished without the pouring out of the vials of his wrath upon the nations of the earth. But the opposition of the enemy we expect will make necessary the interposition of Heaven by the most awful and distressing judgments. "Violent diseases require violent remedies." But let no Christian stand afar off for fear of her torment, and weep and lament for her, saying, "Alas, "alas! that great city Babylon, that mighty city! "for in one hour is thy judgment come." But rather "rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged "you on her."

9. We have seen the good effects of missionary associations upon our own churches. By this mean our Christian acquaintance has been greatly enlarged. Connexions have been formed and correspondences established among many of the disciples of Jesus, who, ten years ago, had never heard of each other. Our anniversary festivals are precious seasons. When we hear of the triumphs of the gospel in distant lands, our souls are refreshed, our faith is strengthened, our hope confirmed, our love inflamed, and our devotions animated.

10. It is worthy of observation that the outpouring of a missionary spirit upon Zion, and the late astonishing revivals of religion, and exertions that are made both in Europe and America to spread the gospel among the heathen, are almost wholly confined to those denominations of Christians, who hold the doctrine of sovereign distinguishing grace.



This providence seems to intimate, that these are the doctrines which will finally prevail and triumph until they become universal in millennial day. These are the doctrines which uniformly tend to humble the creature, exalt the Saviour, and promote holiness in the hearts and lives of all who feel their influence ; which bring glory to God, and honour his grace ; and upon which he has been pleased to put a peculiar honour in every period of the church.

O ye ministers of the everlasting gospel, ye heralds of salvation, suffer a "junior brother" to exhort you, "earnestly to contend for the faith "which was once delivered to the saints." The glory of God, the love of Christ, the worth of souls, and the high responsibility attached to the sacred work, animate our zeal, and constrain us to be faithful. We preach and you hear for eternity !

Christians of every description in this assembly, we exhort you to stand fast in the faith, and carefully maintain good works. Let your conversation be in heaven ; from whence we look for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing. It is in vain for your ministers to contend for the glorious doctrine of grace, unless professors demonstrate to the world, by the holiness of their lives, and the unblamableness of their conversation, that these doctrines teach us to deny ungodliness and every worldly lust, and to live soberly, and righteously, and godly, in this present world. We live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.

Brethren, do we sufficiently realize, that we are to prepare the way for the coming of the

Lord? And, although we may not live to see the temple rise in all its splendour, like David let us diligently collect and prepare the materials for the heavenly building: remember these were of great use to Solomon. Our labours may be of incalculable advantage to posterity.

Under former dispensations, the Lord raised up certain characters to prepare the way of his coming. His first advent was announced by the voice of one crying in the wilderness. But the church as a body is to be the harbinger of his second coming. Yes, brethren, by our prayers, by our tears, by our lives, and by our labours, we are to “prepare the way of the Lord,” and to “make straight in the desert a highway for our God.”

When Jesus was about to celebrate his last supper and institute the holy supper, he sent his *disciples* before him, who made ready for his coming. The virgins *all* trimmed their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. The church as a body will rejoice in the approach of redemption, and cry, “Hosanna, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.” Some characters will unquestionably be much more distinguished than others, but this will be according to the measure of the gift of grace given us in Christ, which will appear in our different talents, zeal, and piety.

Brethren of the society, on a review of this subject, in connexion with so many happy circumstances attending the celebration of this anniversary, and the pleasing intelligence we have received of the progress of the gospel in every quarter of the globe, have we not reason to be encouraged in our missionary labours? Let the success which

has hitherto attended our plans, animate us to greater exertions. Diligently persevere in the use of those means which appear to be so evidently owned and blessed by Heaven, for the enlargement of the Redeemer's kingdom in the world. And while we fervently pray that Zion may be made an eternal excellency, and the joy of many generations, let us aspire, with meekness and humility, to the honour and happiness of being workers together with God; knowing that our labour is not in vain in the Lord.

If there be any in this assembly who are thirsting for the waters of life, let me say to you—Salvation flows in abundance from the ALTAR; a voice from Calvary addresses you; the blood and water from Immanuel's side speak—Come unto me and drink.

On the other hand, if there be any who care for none of these things, we solemnly warn you to prepare to meet your God. Sinners! the progress of the gospel is an alarming consideration to you! Every reformation you hear of, harrows up your consciences, and fills your minds with horror! The return of the waters of the red sea was not more fatal to the host of Pharaoh, nor the deluge more awful to the inhabitants of the old world, than the triumph of the gospel is to you! While the believer with holy enthusiasm cries, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly;" you in amazement will call "to the mountains and rocks, saying, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb."—"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

While we rejoice in the prosperity of Zion, one alarming reflection irresistibly rushes into the mind. It is not whether Jesus Christ will have a church in the world ; *this is certain* ; “ Thy people “ *shall* be willing in the day of thy power ; ” but whether God is not about, in his holy providence, to remove our candlestick out of its place ? Do we hear of the conversion of the heathen ? Who can tell but the patience and long-suffering of God toward us are exhausted, and he is about to transfer a gospel ministry and all our precious religious privileges, to nations who will make a better improvement of them, and render him the fruit of his vineyard in its season ? We leave this solemn thought to your meditation.

It is incumbent on the speaker in the close of this discourse to mention, that the collection now to be taken is for the use of the Missionary Society, In order to excite you to this duty, we need not expatiate on the blessings of a gospel ministry ; nor cause the sympathetic tear to gush from your eyes by detailing the wretchedness of those who are perishing for lack of knowledge ; nor refer you to the example of primitive or modern Christians. We shall only point you to the example of one who has great influence in this assembly ! Behold the man ! He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. Brethren ! “ ye know the grace “ of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was “ rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye “ through his poverty might be rich.” Amen.









